

THE LIGUORIAN

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Devoted to the Growth of Catholic Belief and Practice*

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The Fount of Joy

Amid the throngs I stand on Juda's hills,—

Thou Master teachest there:

How deep Thy earnest voice my spirit thrills,

Thy word, with high resolve my poor heart fills,

Thy glance majestic holy awe instils;

O'erwhelmed I cry: He teacheth as with power!

I see thee pass along drab, narrow ways,—

Thou workest wonders there.

I hear the mute, his voice untutored raise;

The lame leaps up,—his useless crutch displays;

The dead, rise, live! and mothers' hearts give praise;

And with the throng I rush to make thee king!

With John I follow in thy steps at night

When they are traced in blood:

I see the chains unwilling bind Thee tight;

I see Thee scourged and crowned in direful plight;

The heavens grow dark and nature shrinks in fright;

And with Longinus say: 'Tis God's own Son!

I seek Thee with the Magdalen at morn.

To find Thee glorified:

There is the rock that from the tomb was torn;

There is the grave of its dread victory shorn;

There is the Angel, bidding not to mourn;

I turn and lo! 'Tis thou! Rabboni!

But here this night before a crib I kneel,

Thou, now a child art there!

I hear no angel songs from heaven peal;

No dread of might or majesty I feel;

I heed alone thy outstretched arms' appeal:

Come! Yes here I come at last.

Before this crib I am a child again.

A child with Thee, my God.

Those baby eyes each fearsome thought restrain:

Thy helplessness soothes every searing pain;

Thy baby hands hold me with love's sweet chain;

And laughter to my heart returns!

—Aug. T. Zeller, C. Ss. R.

Father Tim Casey

WASP, THE NEWSBOY

C. D. McENNIRY, C.Ss.R.

Just as the semaphore flashed green on the Christmas snow, and full fifty chugging automobiles shot forward to make the crossing, a slouching newsboy stepped carelessly in front of one of the foremost machines. The driver bawled a frantic warning and set his emergency brake, bringing the car to a halt and causing a rapid succession of shocks in the fast moving line behind him. Had the lad been as stupid as his conduct indicated, he should surely have been run down before the car came to a stop, but when the fender was already grazing his knee, he leaped back with the agility of a goblin, then looked up and grinned with devilish glee at the confusion he had deliberately caused, while the chauffeurs cursed him in impotent rage. Spying a police officer in the offing, he moved briskly on shouting:

"Mawnin' papers! Mawnin' papers!"

Father Casey, passing from his house to the church for the Midnight Christmas Mass, heard the familiar voice and hailed the newsboy.

"Wasp, come here. I want six or eight papers to send to some of my absent people so they will know what we are doing here on Christmas. How many have you left?"

The lad ran a dirty, dexterous finger between the folds, stated the number, handed over the entire stock, pocketed his generous payment, and turned to go. Father Casey halted him with the inquiry:

"What are you going to do now, Wasp?"

"Goin' to me Uncle's." The voice was hard as ever, but, to Father Casey's intense amazement, there was a quiver in the defiant lips.

Wasp—no living being knew his other names nor his parentage, his nationality or his age—was a product and a denizen of the slums. He sold papers for the same reason that the gangster he called "Uncle" kept a dilapidated delivery wagon—to be able to show the police "a visible means of support" and thereby cover up other activities less legitimate. Nurtured amid crime and brutality, forced from babyhood to fight for his existence, Wasp was "hard as nails." Used as a tool in dark and devious undertakings long before he saw the dawn

of reason, he had developed the instinct to regard every human being as a possible enemy, to be always on the defensive. Though fore-ordained by training and environment for a life of outlawry or a violent and untimely death, there was something in the clean-cut features and black sparkling eyes that told of better things that might have been.

Father Casey had long ago noted this. He generally went out of his way to buy his daily paper from Wasp, and always greeted the lad with a cheery word and a kindly smile. Yet, for all his pains, the good priest had never yet succeeded in making the slightest dent in the defensive armor of this child of the underworld. Hence his amazement when the telltale trembling lips betrayed some stirrings of tender feelings within the calloused young heart.

He guessed the cause. St. Mary's bells were just then ringing out their glad Christmas tidings, floods of light poured through the stained windows of the church changing to jewels the frosty covering of the trees, the streets from every side were alive with the crunching sound of hurrying feet upon the snow, and a vast multitude—happy fathers and mothers and laughing children—were crowding in through the swinging doors. The unfortunate outcast who had never known home or parents or innocent pleasures or God or religion, was crushed by his hopeless loneliness. His papers were sold. Nothing remained for him but to spend the remaining hours of the night lounging about dens of drunken revelry, for the lie about "goin' to me Uncle's" was merely the stereotyped excuse which he habitually adopted to escape arrest.

Father Casey's heart went out to him in pity. Still 'twere useless to invite him into the church, for the boy, proud as Lucifer, would not mingle with the well dressed children and run the chance of being snubbed.

Then came a happy inspiration.

"Why be in a hurry? This is Christmas night," he said. "Come in and see our Christmas services. I can bring you up this side stairs to a little upper gallery where you will have a splendid view. I don't let the people up there for fear of a panic."

Wasp's rebel spirit recoiled from patronage, above all when it seemed to have a string attached for drawing him into a "preachy meetin'." Repugnance to this was one of the most deep-rooted traditions of his class. But there came upon him an overwhelming loathing

to return to his criminal haunts on this Christmas night. He weakened.

"Where's dat gall'ry?" The inquiry, for all its sullenness, was eager.

Father Casey led the way: "If you get tired, Wasp, you can leave by this stairs. Otherwise I shall come up when the services are over and tell you what it all meant."

From his high perch, Wasp had a perfect view of all that passed below. It would have been a striking sight for an ordinary person of his years. But this child, with more than a man's experience, was surfeited with displays. He glanced at the vast crowd below—but he lived in crowds. He saw the altar radiant in lights and flowers—but there were brighter lights in the moving picture houses, and more flowers in the show windows. He marked the brilliant vestments on the priests and the servers—he had often seen more gaudy uniforms in a parade. These things had no interest for him. The children sang. But already he had learned to hate children who had a home and loving parents and pretty clothes. In some indefinable way he felt that he had a grievance against them. For a few minutes, true, he was intensely alert: that was while the ushers took up the collection—in fact, he did not take his eyes from them until they had finished their task and disappeared into the sacristy. Not that he cherished any conscious intention of playing false to the man who had befriended him—it was merely training and habit which always made him note every detail of a possible "haul." He had been beaten too often for neglecting his "business" to forget this.

One thing there was, however, which caught his attention, and held it—it was so different from anything he had ever seen before, so strange and yet so simple, so expressive of something, yet a something he could not grasp—that was the beautiful Christmas crib. He saw Father Casey turn towards it several times during the sermon, and he knew he was talking about it, though he could not grasp the meaning of the strange words. As soon as the services were ended, he noted how the people came to kneel before it, how young mothers pointed it out to their little ones and seemed to be telling them something wonderful and beautiful about it. In fact, his curiosity was aroused to such a pitch that, when he saw Father Casey coming up the stairs, he forgot his habitual reserve and broke out into a torrent of questions:

"Say, whazzat all about—de kid in de manger and de mule and de steer an' all de sheep an' de ole boid wit' de stick an' de putty goil? Gee whizz, dat's great! Whazzit all about?"

The priest overlooked the crudeness of these words which would have been scarcely short of blasphemy in another, but which were without guile in this unlettered waif. But how could he explain? Where should he begin?

"Wasp," he began, "did you ever hear about God?"

The thin lips curled in a knowing grin.

"I'll say I did! It's a coise woid! 'By God.' 'God da—'"

"Listen, Wasp," Father Casey hastened to interrupt him. Here was a child living in a Christian land, who had never heard the adorable name of God pronounced except in oaths and curses, who knew no more of Christ or the meaning of Christmas than the cannibals of Darkest Africa. "Jesus and Mary," he whispered, "give me the grace to tell him the wondrous story of Bethlehem and of your love for him in words which he can understand." Then with a great effort to be clear, he began:

"God," my boy, "is a Person. He is good; He is kind; He is great. He made this earth where we live, and the ocean and the sun and the stars. He made them out of nothing—just said, 'Let them be made,' and where there had been nothing at all before, there was the world. It is God who taught the birds to sing and the trees to grow. He made the first man and woman, the first father and mother of everybody. Nobody made Him; He always was and He always will be. He is right here with us now and everywhere else at the same time, but He is, what we call, a spirit, that is, He is so much finer and purer and better than we, that we cannot see Him with these coarse eyes of ours. His real home is in heaven. Heaven is a place away beyond the stars where everything is bright and beautiful and where people never are sick or sad and never die, where they are exceedingly happy and nothing can ever occur to stop them from being happy. God sees you and me and everybody all the time, and He is always thinking of us. He loves every one of us, and He wants to take us up to His wonderful home in heaven when we die. But He cannot take us up there unless we love Him, for nobody that does not love Him can enter there. But because He is a spirit and we cannot see Him, He was afraid we would forget Him, forget to love Him, and thus make

it impossible for Him to take us up to His home in heaven. And what do you suppose He decided to do to keep us from forgetting Him, from forgetting to love Him? You would never, never guess—it was such a wonderfully good and loving thing for this great God to do! He decided to come down here on earth and become one of us, so that we could see Him and have pictures of Him and stories about Him, so that we could hardly help thinking of Him and loving Him. He could have saved us in another way, but in His great love He decided to do this.

“Remember, Wasp, He did not need us; He was perfectly happy in His wonderful home in heaven without us. He did not need us at all. Why, He could, if He wanted to, destroy the earth and all the people in it, with one word, and make a million worlds like this, all filled with people much better and nicer than we are. It was just for our sake that He wanted us to love Him; He knew we could never be happy unless we loved Him. And so He decided to come down here and live among us. Of course, He could have come here as a full grown man, if He wanted to, with a grand mansion and hundreds of servants and any amount of money, but no, He was afraid the poor people might be afraid of Him, and, you know, He loves poor people more than anybody else. That is why He decided to come into the earth as a helpless little baby on Christmas night, to live in poverty, to work and suffer, and then to die a painful death to save us. Before He came into the world, He picked out His own mother. He chose a young maiden called the holy Virgin Mary because she was better and purer and sweeter than any other woman that ever lived. And He arranged that she should have a holy old man, called Joseph, to take care of her and protect her.

“Now, the day before God was born into this world, the holy Virgin Mary and good old Joseph were on a journey. It was a raw winter day, and almost dark, when they got to the town, called Bethlehem. Look there over the top of the stable; see all those houses off in the distance—they are the warm, comfortable houses of the town of Bethlehem. The holy Virgin Mary and good old Joseph had relatives living in some of those houses, uncles and aunts, you know, and cousins, and all that. They had hurried as fast as they could to get to Bethlehem before dark so that they could take supper and spend the night with one of their uncles. Well, they inquired of a man they

met on the street where this uncle lived. The man said, he didn't know. Then they asked a boy. The boy told them, down this street and up that one. They followed his directions and found it was not the right place. After wandering about the crooked streets and trying the wrong house many times, at last they found it. It surely looked good to them when they saw the name of their uncle on the door, for they were hungry and wet and tired out. Joseph rapped at the door and then waited to see how glad and surprised his uncle would be when he found who had come to visit them. But the uncle said: 'Oh, so you have come to Bethlehem, have you? You must pay us a little visit some day. We can't take you in tonight because we have no room.' Then poor Joseph and Mary started all over again to find the house of another uncle, and when they found it, they got the same cold answer: 'We have no room.' Joseph began to be afraid that Mary would catch a bad cold and maybe die. He decided to go to the hotel. That would take nearly all the money he had left, but they had to go somewhere. The people at the hotel saw that Joseph was a poor man, and so they didn't want to be bothered with him. They said: 'All our places are taken; we have no room.'

"Driven away from the homes of men, they finally took shelter with the beasts. In an old dilapidated stable on the side of the road, where they stopped to spend the night, the holy Virgin Mary gave birth to a baby and laid him in the manger. The ass and the ox warmed him with their breath. That baby was not the son of any man; it was the great God himself who loved men so much that He came into this world and became a helpless babe to win their love. But men did not love Him in return. They drove His mother away from their doors, and He was born in a stable because, in the houses of men, there was no room for Him.

"People were told how God was to be born among them, but they were too lazy or too selfish to pay any attention to it. A few poor, simple, hard-working shepherds, who were watching their sheep on the hills that night, were the only ones that cared. And so God sent an angel to them. The angel suddenly stood before them and said: 'Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy. And this shall be a sign unto you, you shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.' And then they saw hundreds of other angels all around singing: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace

to men of good will.' The poor shepherds were glad and thankful to hear that God loves us so much. They rose up at once and took their lanterns and went to look for the stable. And when they saw the Baby God, they knelt down and adored Him. Of all the millions of men whom God was born into this world to save on that first Christmas night, these few poor shepherds were the only ones that came to thank Him.

"You see, my boy," Father Casey said in conclusion, "that is why we have a little imitation of the Stable of Bethlehem in the church at Christmas—to make the people remember that it is God's birthday, so they will not leave Him abandoned and forgotten now as they did on that first Christmas Day."

There they stood, side by side, those strange companions, the priest in his cassock and the street rat in his greasy sweater, both leaning over the railing of the gallery and looking intently at the figures in the crib below. The distance and the soft glow of the candles—for the electric lights had been turned off—gave the scene a remarkable appearance of reality, as though they were looking, not at lifeless statues, but at Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, the angels and the shepherds. The priest spoke rapidly, earnestly; the boy listened. When he heard how much God loves us and how badly we treated Him, a single tear ran down his cheek, leaving a dirty streak behind it.

Father Casey, who had sometimes seen a vast audience weeping while he preached, never before felt such a thrill of pleasure as when he saw the effect of his words upon this hardened child of the slums.

"Home, the place where we are treated best, and grumble most." How true that saying. Examine your conscience, Johnny, Mary and Gladys, to see if this means you. While we are at it Dad might take a look inside also. Home should be a Paradise on earth but grumblers and growlers make it a Purgatory.

Try to preserve a sweet tranquillity of mind. Say to your soul: "Courage! We have made a false step, but let us go steadily on and keep watch over ourselves."—*St. Francis De Sales*.

The secret of progress lies in knowing how to make use not of what we have chosen but of what is forced upon us.—*Spalding*.

Tried By Fire

JACK KEEFE COMES BACK

J. R. MELVIN, C.Ss.R.

Friday afternoon in the Seventh grade, Sister Alphonsus was tired and weary and longed for the hour to pass that would see the close of the toilsome week. Her boys loved the hour—visions of football to come on the morrow were prefaced by the reward of work well done—a story from Sister. Somehow, no matter how laggard had been the brains of the class, no matter how active their mischievous hands and tireless tongues, Sister always found or invented a reason to close the week with a story. Stories of boys they always were, for Sister understood boys and loved them. Often she read from a book, stories that gripped the boys' imaginations and caused their eyes to sparkle—stories not of "goody goodies"—but of real live boys of all ages. But strange to say, the boys loved her stories best when she told of boyish heroes of days ago, of strange lands and times, yet showing in them still from every land and clime the eternal heart of the boy. She told in her own naïve way, with her own peculiar language, the idiom of her boys, the story of Tarcisius—she held and gripped and thrilled those twentieth century lads with the tale of that boy of long ago who bore in his arms his God and died rather than let the Blessed Sacrament be profaned. Sister never preached directly. She told her tales so that the sermons of clean living and high ideals unfolded themselves so clearly that the boys' hearts reached out and grasped them and held them fast as long as life would last.

All the rest had gone that day but one still lingered—one who usually was the first to rush from the school with wild shout and carefree laughter, who loved not books and seemingly cared not how he stood in class provided only laughter and fun were his. The thorn in Sister Alphonsus' heart, Jack Keefe, whose escapades made each class-day a riot and whose dullness made teaching seem a torture, lingered long—lingered until no companion could see him plod guiltily and slowly back to the class room. There was something on Jack's mind, something struggling to make itself clear to his dullard brain, and to solve his doubts he needs must have recourse to the idol of boyish omniscience "Sister."

"Sister, please—" he stammered, when he had rapped on the door of the class room and had been told to enter.

"Yes, Jack," said Sister Alphonsus, quietly; "what is it?"

"Sister, don't think I'm crazy, but I want to ask you something about that Tarcissors guy," and Jack's hands swung his books violently to and fro by their strap while his brow streamed embarrassed perspiration.

"You mean Tarcisius," corrected Sister smilingly.

"Yeh, that's him—the kid you told us about today. Gee, wasn't he a game guy, Sister?" and Jack forgot his embarrassment and his grammar in his enthusiasm.

"He certainly was brave," agreed Sister, "but, of course, Our Lord gave him the strength. What did you want to know about him, Jack?"

"Aw gee, Sister," blurted Jack, "I'm ashamed to ask."

"Don't be ashamed, Jack," urged Sister; "tell me what's on your mind."

"You won't think I'm crazy, Sister? Honest?" stammered the boy.

"Not at all, Jack," smiled Sister, with that convincing tone that made boys feel that she understood them.

"Well, Sister—you see—I mean—aw—that is, I want to ask—do you think there's any chance of a boy being like Tarcissors nowadays?" And Jack's countenance rivaled his carrotty hair by the fury of his blushes.

"Why, of course; you are like Tarcisius every time you receive our dear Lord in Holy Communion," said Sister softly.

"I know, Sister," said Jack, "but that's not what I mean. I mean, do you think Jesus would let a boy die for Him nowadays. You see, I'm a bad boy—just as bad as can be—and I guess I'll be worse if I live—but, honest, Sister, I'd like to be like Tarcissors and let somebody kill me just to show our Lord I don't mean to be bad, but want to love Him."

The heart of the little nun thrilled. God often sent her consolations like this. Here was the bane of her teaching life, the wild, untamable lad showing the good that is down in the heart of every boy.

"Well, Jack," she said simply, "the days of the martyrs are past. But remember this, no matter how bad you may be, the Sacred Heart

of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament still loves you. Always try to remember that, and even if God doesn't ask you to die for Him, He may ask you to do great things for Him."

"I'll remember, Sister," said Jack, making for the door as he heard shouts ascending from the football field, "but, gee, I certainly would like to show our Lord that Americans make just as good martyrs as Romans. Some day, maybe, I'll be like Tarcissors." And Jack sped away to where the team were calling lustily for their fullback.

* * *

Strange how a vagrant youthful memory will linger when more important items of knowledge have vanished. Thus, Faith often smoulders in a heart where works are dead. Sister Alphonsus had long slept in her quiet grave at Mount Loretto and Jack Keefe, poor wayward black sheep, had wandered far from the boyhood class room, and from other familiar scenes as well. Classmates had gone their varied ways; some to mount the ladder of success, some to strive manfully against misfortune's tide, but dullard Jack had always been a drifter—drifting as flotsam is wont to do, further and further from the moorings of home and friends and religion. Never wicked, always a weakling, life had gone hard with him. Gray and grizzled and seamed with the lines that dull, drab plodding written upon the countenance, he had come as he thought to the bottom of the ladder of misfortune.

Lone and homeless he had drifted during the great war to an industrial town in one of the Middle Eastern States. There the dearth of younger men had secured him profitable work in the giant steel mills. More by this same lack of better material than by any efforts of his own, he had been pushed forward until he occupied the responsible position of "rougner" on the heavy rolls that fashioned steel into girders. Content, he had been happy in the thought that his days were to be spent in comfort, though the toil was hard. But the old failing, love of company, and a desire to be agreeable to all, had caused his downfall. He broke the rules—left the mills one night with a crowd of men who had just received their pay. He returned in a joyous state of inebriation. His unsteady hands had pulled the wrong lever and forty tons of steel went crashing to destruction, though a merciful Providence had shielded the lives of workmen in its way. Jack had been forthwith discharged.

Day after day he had haunted the gates of the mill. Fellow workmen had interceded for him; his superintendent had pleaded for him; but higher officials were obdurate and rightly insisted that he could not be trusted in a position where human lives depended on a steady hand and clear brain. A man who drank once would drink again, they argued, and Jack was left to bewail his misfortune—with many to sympathize, but none to help.

It had been long since he had attended Mass; longer still since he had approached the Sacraments, but like many another man, he turned to God only when he had no place else to go. He attended Mass again and finally, after much quavering of conscience, approached the Sacraments with a sincere resolve to change his life.

It was while making his brief, though humble, thanksgiving that the thought of his boyhood teacher and her simple story of Tarcisus came once more to his mind. "Tarcissors!" he groaned at the thought of his useless life, "and I'm the guy that wanted to die for Christ. Huh—I didn't even follow Sister's advice to live for Him." Then he prayed within himself a strange prayer: "Lord, I've made a mess of life. Make me like Tarcissors even though I am an old sinner and not a young saint."

And God, God who sees and searches hearts, listened and understood.

Whether it was pity or a desire to get rid of Jack which prompted the offer, on the morning after his return to grace, a foreman said to him:

"Now, Jack, there's not a chance for you on the rolls or in the mill, but I'll give you the only job I can hand out without being jacked up by the General Office."

"I'll take anything," responded Jack.

"Well, then, if you're so hard up, you can come out tomorrow, and go to work with the loading gang in the yards."

"What! With the flatheads?" asked Jack indignantly. "Do you think I'm a white man?"

"Take or leave it," said the foreman. "I'd do better by you if I could, but 'twasn't me but yourself that got you fired."

"To blazes with it!" said Jack, turning indignantly; "I haven't fallen that low yet."

"Well," remarked the foreman, "if I was on the outside and look-

ing in, and wanted real bad to get inside, I'd take any old thing. Think it over and report in the morning, if you want to go to work."

Jack muttered and mumbled and declared to himself that he'd starve before he'd join the yard gang. To understand Jack's feelings we must understand that the "yard gang" is the lowest possible form of degradation for a native-born American in the steel mills. To it are assigned the newly arrived foreigners, whose brawn is greater than their knowledge of steel working. It is made up of Poles and Lithuanians and Slavs, with an occasional Italian or negro. "Flatheads," the generic name for Slavs in the mills, soon graduate to higher forms of labor, but for an American born and bred to be found in the yard gangs, is a sign that he is either half-witted or else has reached the lowest steps on the ladder of disgrace in the mills.

Nevertheless, in spite of his protests and vociferations, Jack appeared next morning for work and for the few succeeding weeks was part and parcel of the yard gang. At first he refused even to notice his fellows in the gang and treated them with a surly contempt. However, your foreigner, especially the Slav, looks for tolerance and contempt from his American fellows on his arrival in this country, and it cannot dampen their stolid good nature nor put a stop to their dogged attempts to make friends. Jack, whose age made him the weakest of the gang, often found a Slav taking the heavy end of a load when beam-ends or scrap were to be loaded, and by common consent the easier tasks were yielded to him. A man would have to be a confirmed misanthrope not to surrender to such kindness, and in a few days Jack found himself conversing in broken English with the few men who could speak in that tongue, and enjoying the rough jokes of which he was never the butt. Soon he began to receive their confidences and to learn their hopes and ambitions. His heart did not fully warm to the gang until he found that this particular gang were to a man Catholics, and much alarmed by threats which had been made repeatedly by the Ku Klux Klansmen against themselves and their beautiful church. This church Jack had known in a vague sort of a way as Catholic, but had grown with his fellow Americans to refer to it contemptuously as the Flat Head Church. He advised the men to report the matter to the burgess, and was told smilingly that their priest had done so and had received no satisfaction.

* * *

A night made lurid by belching furnace and hissing vessels of molten steel pouring forth showers of spark and fitful flame. The yard gang toiling through their last half of their weary fourteen hours of night shift drudgery. Jack Keefe, weary, discouraged, sitting on a pile of cold steel watching four of his comrades swinging with heavy tongs a slab aboard a dingy train from which it had fallen. Over the near-by fence clambors an unwieldly form. Breathless he gasps a flood of gutturals into the ear of the Slovak foreman. Excitement ensues. Tongs are dropped, hand-leathers cast aside, and Big Mike, the foreman, turns to Jack.

"Mister Jack," he says in hurried broken English, "Ku Kluxers, they make trouble. Have shoot priest—they say now they set fire to church and make to nothing!"

"What!" shouted Jack. "Are you sure?"

"Sure," replied Big Mike. "This man, him all right. Him no lie. What do you think Slavish man must do?"

"Do!" shouted Jack. "Fight, of course. Fight and save the Blessed Sacrament. Mike—Mike, you slowpoke, run to the thirty-inch mill. Tell Donovan what's going on and tell him to let the rolls go to the devil, and bring every Irishman he can get hold of to the top of the hill. Wait a minute—tell these flatheads of yours to do what I say. Will they fight?"

"They fight till they die for Catholic Church," said Big Bill simply.

"Right! Tell Stanny here, to make the others obey me. Be off with you, Mike."

Mike ran off and Jack turned to the panic-stricken foreigners.

"Stanny, tell this bunch to grab pick handles or tongs or any old thing that will split a Ku Klux skull and come after me. Hurry up, for God's sake, hurry up, all of ye." And Jack, with unwonted agility, ran to the fence, clambored over it and crossing the railroad tracks, hurried pantingly up the long, steep path that led to the church on the heights. Behind him, grim and sullenly determined, streamed the yard gang to a man. As they struck the heavy grade a whistle shrilled in the thirty-inch mill.

"There's Donovan shutting down," muttered Jack. The whistle voiced another blast. "All hands!" gritted Keefe. "Thank God the Irish won't be far behind us."

Even as he spoke, a tongue of flame leaped from the steeple of the Church above them.

"Oh, the dirty cowards! They've done it," groaned Jack. "God have mercy on us; Jesus help us to be in time." And he drove his weary legs forward in spite of his panting breath and throbbing muscles stiff with age. A younger man passed him, another, and then another. The Slavs had caught his fighting spirit.

In a few minutes they came to the top of the hill, where stood the church and priest house. Flames were shooting forth from its windows. Around the building grouped threateningly, armed with rifles and revolvers, stood a half hundred hooded figures. As the workmen appeared the guns were turned toward them. The foreigners paused.

"Don't stop, men," shouted Jack. "Remember, God may be in there. At them, at them and tear them apart."

Suiting action to word, Jack charged, smiting at the head of a hooded Klansman, with a pick handle he had caught up in the rush from the mill. The revolver in the hands of the Klansman flashed—Jack felt his arm and shoulder go numb, but the pick handle found its mark and the bigot fell. Not a foreigner faltered in following Jack. Placid, uncomplaining at work amid blows and curses, now spurred on by Faith, they fought like tigers. Three of them fell, the others halted not, but pushed forward, twisting rifles from cowardly hands, striking madly, furiously with all sorts of weapons at the ghostly guard.

"The priest!" shouted Jack; "where is he?"

From the outskirts of the crowd of women a voice shouted in reply, "He's dying in the house."

Jack rushed towards the house, followed by two of his fighting Slavs. A hooded Klansman on guard at the door, went to meet his Maker as a pair of steel tongs scattered his brains on the doorstep. In the house, Jack bent over the form of the priest who lay groaning in his own blood.

As Jack bent over him his eyes opened. Poor man! Young, zealous, faithful to death, he was dying. "Did you get the Blessed Sacrament, Father?" queried Jack.

"No, no," groaned the priest. "It must be destroyed, I fear."

"There's a chance of saving it, Father," said Jack earnestly. "The Klansmen have set fire to the front of the church. I think the altar is still untouched. Can you make it if I carry you?"

"I'm afraid not," whispered the priest. "I am too far gone. Will you?" he groaned. "Will you try to save our Lord?"

"Gladly, Father," said Jack, "but I'm not worthy."

"Try," and the priest smiled. "Try, and God will make you worthy."

"The key," asked Jack, "where is the key to the tabernacle?"

"Right there," said the priest; "there on my desk."

Jack picked up the key which the dying priest designated.

"God help me, I'll try," said he fervently. Then turning to the foreigners who had followed him:

"Here, you fellows, step out. Me want go confession." They obeyed his order. Jack knelt beside the priest for a brief moment. The latter absolved him.

Forth rushed Jack again into the night, into the melee. He saw the Klansmen giving way. As he ran a voice shouted, "The firemen came but the Kluxers cut the hose." He reached the front entrance to the church. Flame and smoke belched forth.

"No hope there," he muttered, and made his way to the side near the rear. A window was in reach.

"Here, buddy," he called to a Slav workman, who had retired from the battle for an instant to wipe the blood that blinded him from a cut above his eye. "Break this window, will you? Me want to go in."

The Slav obeyed. The crash of glass was followed by a shout from the front of the church.

"Big Mike, he come with the Irishers," said the Slav.

"The fight's over, then!" said Jack as the Slav gave him a hand and he clambored through the window.

Once inside, he coughed and gasped. The church was filled with smoke; flames licked the ceiling; the pews were a mass of flame, and the fire was reaching out and enveloping the sanctuary rail. Above all the riot of destruction, through the smoke and flame, gleamed the flicker of the sanctuary lamp. Jack made towards it. At times the fire scorched his arms, once he stumbled, and his face was scorched ere he rose to his feet and stumbled on.

He reached the altar, fitted the key into the lock of the Tabernacle, fumbled for an instant and the door swung open. He genuflected reverently, as he had seen priests do, reached into the unfamiliar recesses and lifted out the most precious of God's gifts to men—Himself beneath the sacramental forms. Making sure that nothing remained within, Jack took the two sacred vessels, of which he did not even know

the names, and turned to go. His path was blocked. In his eagerness to reach the Tabernacle, he had paid no heed to the crash behind him. A portion of the roof had fallen and egress through the window was impossible. As he stood a piece of stone fell at his feet from the roof, narrowly missing him, and sending up a shower of sparks and embers and smoke that burned and scorched his skin, and made him cough and choke. He turned to the altar. A vase overturned and showered him with water that seemed ice cold in that sea of flame and smoke. Setting down the vessels he carried he reached up in the clouds of smoke and took other vases from the altar. Pouring their contents over the altar cloths he ripped the water-soaked cloths from the table and wrapped them around the sacred vessels.

"What a funny way to treat God!" he murmured as he did so. Blindly he staggered towards the sacristy, murmuring prayers as he went. A beam crashing from the roof felled him; he rose, blood streaming from his forehead, and staggered on. Through a furnace of flame he thrust his way, he strove to hold his breath but his straining lungs gave one deep inhalation and he felt as though his very heart were seared by the scorching flame. Into the sacristy he came at last. A key was in the door. His trembling hand had just enough strength to turn it. He faltered forward and fell into the outside air. Even as he fell, two Klansmen fleeing from the victorious Catholics, now reinforced by State troopers with shot guns, stopped long enough to snatch at the Burden he bore. But his hands, his burned and scarred hands from which the flesh was dropping, clung with convulsive grip and they fled, leaving his Treasure untouched. Into the rectory, tender reverent believing hands bore him still hugging his Precious Treasure.

The parish priest still lived though his eyes were closed, his lips livid, and his breathing but a feeble gasping. Down beside him strong men, down whose cheeks tears rolled unashamed, laid the scorched and scarred remains of him who had once been carefree Jack Keefe.

"I saved Him, Father! I saved Him!" moaned the smoke and flame seared lips. The priest opened his eyes and gazed into the blinded eyes of the homely hero.

"Tarcisius!" he murmured, "Tarcisius! God bless you."

And priest and workman, guardians of Christ, leader and soldier, passed from life together.

~~Fairy Tales For Grown-Ups~~

IV. THE MODERN "ANCIENT MARINER"

ANDREW F. BROWNE, C.Ss.R.

Once upon a time:

There was an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long gray beard and glittering eye
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?"

"The bridegroom's doors are open wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set,
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand,
"There was a ship," quoth he.
"Hold off, unhand me, gray-beard loon."
Eftsoons his hand dropped he.

He holds him with his glittering eye,
The wedding guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child;
The Mariner hath his will.

So run the opening lines of Samuel T. Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner." It is unique in English literature for its weird imagery and vivid portrayal of the preternatural. The poem opens with the old weather-beaten Mariner seeking to relieve his heart of the surcharge of emotions brought about by his extraordinary and harrowing experiences on the deep. He stops the young man hurrying to the wedding feast, and in spite of the fact that the young man was very loathe to linger, the story tells that the mariner "held him with his glittering eye." He cannot choose but hear. The old man was a good story teller; he had a thrilling story and knew how to tell it.

History has a way of repeating itself, and olden tales are apt to

find striking counterparts in modern life. So I shall tell you the tale of the modern "Ancient Mariner."

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCING THE MODERN MARINER, MR. SMUT.

Mr. Smut was a story-teller; not by profession, it is true, but by way of pastime. Furthermore he was a type, in that he represented about ninety per cent of the story-tellers of our day. He was not extraordinarily gifted with imaginative and descriptive powers, as we had always thought a good story-teller ought to be; but in spite of this drawback, he had gained great popularity and success. Upon analysis it was found that his success was due largely to a shrewd choice of subjects for his tales, as well as a judicious choice of listeners. He could breeze into a gathering where gloom hung heavy as a pall, and in less time than it takes to tell, put them in a state of hilarious good humor. Indeed, his success as a story-teller was such that he made the Ancient Mariner look like a deaf-mute acting as an auctioneer.

Of course, this was not altogether surprising, since the old-fashioned Mariner knew nothing of the value of specialization, with which we moderns have become so familiar. And Mr. Smut was not only a story-teller, but a specialist in the art. In other lines than his specialty he was not at all voluble; in fact, quite the reverse. When the conversation ran upon literature, history, economics, religion, and other very promising subjects, Mr. Smut was speechless, for the truth of the matter was, he was not interested in such things, and did not know a great deal about them. A man couldn't be supposed to know everything, and Mr. Smut had long since learned the value of silence, except when he had a chance to trot out his specialty, and then he would yield the palm to no man.

Now Mr. Smut gave evidence of great sagacity, to say the least, in his choice of a specialty in story-telling, and showed that he realized the importance of following the line of least resistance. His subject was the easiest of all to handle, and besides, it would interest a much wider audience than other stories. Of course, these two facts were in no way complimentary ~~to~~ to his own genius or information nor to the prevalent taste of the public in this matter or stories; but that was neither here nor there. Mr. Smut was not given to moralizing; ~~but~~ rather accepted conditions as he found them.

In his choice of an audience Mr. Smut was no less shrewd. He

never told his stories to his mother or to his sisters; and in a parlor filled with respectable people, he seemed to realize by intuition that it was no place to display his wares. He sensed the fact that refined minds are not so easily influenced by his type of stories, and that to attempt them would be to stigmatize himself as ill-mannered, vulgar, morally depraved. But in the proper environment, with a cough to clear his throat and a reminiscent smirk, he would launch forth, and could easily outdo any one who would try to match him. In fact, he was becoming famous by reason of his stories, and it was certainly encouraging to note how his stories were passed on, and how many would preface their remarks by saying: "I heard a dandy story from Mr. Smut the other day."

So to make a long story short, I shall try to tell you that Mr. Smut had specialized on the Smutty Story: his audience was such as he knew would appreciate the foul frothings of a depraved mind, and their number was legion.

CHAPTER II. MR. SMUT STOPPETH ONE OF THREE.

It so happened that on a certain morning Mr. Smut had excogitated a particularly good story—that is to say, particularly good in the line of the Smut specialty; and he was all agog to find someone in a receptive mood who would appreciate the various elegancies of this latest spawn of his fertile brain.

It was not very long till he saw three men coming down the street, ~~who were~~ evidently on business bent. They were Mr. Buzzard, Mr. Spineless, and Mr. Freeze-em-out. Mr. Smut was delighted. Here was a chance to tell his story; and like the Ancient Mariner, he stoppeth one of three. Taking ~~Mr.~~ Buzzard by the button-hole, he said to him:

"Hello, Buzzard, can I talk to you for a few minutes?" You see, Mr. Smut was not sure that the other two ~~men~~ would appreciate his story.

Now, Buzzard did not recognize Smut for a moment, and started to pull away with: "Busy now, see you some other time." But Smut was not to be thwarted.

"Don't you remember me, Buzzard? I'm Smut." And—'he held him with his glittering eye; he could not choose but hear,' as the poem has it. For truth to tell, Buzzard had always had an attraction for Smut, and was ~~always~~ happiest when in his company.

"Well, if it ain't Smut!" he shouted. "And he's got another story. Just a minute, boys. Ah, Mr. Spineless, Mr. Smut; Mr. Freeze-em-out, Mr. Smut. Now, then, let's have the story. Smut, I'm in a deuce of a hurry." (Editor's note: Buzzard's conversation given here in expurgated form.) Mr. Spineless shook hands with Mr. Smut and smiled. Freeze-em-out bowed stiffly. "All right, ~~Mr.~~ Smut, let's go!" And Mr. Smut went.

The story was disgraceful and sordid enough, but Buzzard simply gloated over the incident and every detail; and when the climax was reached, his boisterous laugh was loud and long.

~~Mr.~~ Spineless had evinced symptoms of extreme nervousness as the story progressed; and now that it was ended and he was evidently expected to join in the applause, he became still more nervous. Buzzard turned to him and with a leer and a nudge, shouted to him:

"Good Lord, Spineless, don't you get it? Best story Smut ever told."

For a fraction of a minute Spineless struggled, and then weakly succumbed. He laughed a forced uneasy laugh, and then admitted rather half heartedly, "Yes, it is a rather good story, Smut."

Smut and Buzzard both turned to Freeze-em-out, who was ominously silent, and as serious as the proverbial judge.

"Don't you get it?" said Smut. Freeze-em-out simply looked him in the eye deliberately and calmly; not a muscle of his face twitched, nor the ghost of a smile on his strong features.

"No!" said he, curtly, never taking his eyes from those of Smut; "I'm afraid I don't." Smut was a bit taken back, but Buzzard saved the situation by calling insistently for another story.

"Sorry," said Freeze-em-out, "but I'll have to be going. Come, Spineless." And Spineless was glad to go.

Freeze-em-out and Spineless walked along for several blocks and neither man said a word. Finally Spineless broke the silence by saying shamefacedly:

"Rotten story that Smut told."

"Very," said Freeze-em-out laconically.

"I don't really like that kind of stuff," said Spineless. "Hardly ever tell 'em myself, unless—" he added apologetically, "I happen to be with a crowd where everybody is telling them. Not that I care to tell them, you understand; but if you don't tell ~~them~~ something in that

line, they all start to razz you, call you religious and make a fool out of you."

"That so?" said Freeze-em-out. "Never knew a man was a fool for being sensibly religious, or decent. Seems to me ~~that~~ a man would have more pride than to let the razzing of such people as Smut and Buzzard force him to do that which his religion, his training, and decency tell him is wrong. For myself, I'm rather proud of being considered religious, though I'm not really as religious as I ought to be."

"You don't think a fellow ought to tell such stories under any circumstances, then?" said Spineless.

"I can't find any good reason why he should," said Freeze-em-out. "The thing is wrong, it shows a depraved taste, and a depraved mind. And besides being a Catholic, I consider it a sin. Mind, I don't mean to say that all these double meaning stories and jokes are mortal sins. In fact, I believe ~~that~~ many of them are not. But on the other hand, I don't think they're right. But I do think that stories which are descriptively obscene can scarcely be excused from the guilt of mortal sin."

"I guess you're right," said Spineless. "A fellow ought not to tell them under any circumstances; but a fellow can't help hearing them sometimes. I don't feel that I'm responsible if some one tells me one of Smut's stories, do you?"

"Let me answer your two questions separately," said Freeze-em-out. "It is very true that you can't help hearing these stories sometimes, as our last experience goes to show. But whether you are responsible for it depends to a great extent on the circumstances, as well as on the fact whether you encourage them or not."

"But," pursued Spineless, "if Smut tells me one of his stories, that is his affair, not mine."

"Think not?" said Freeze-em-out. "If you think it is none of your business when a man insults you, then, of course, it is not any of your business if Smut tells you one of his stories."

"I can't see that he intends to insult me by that," said Spineless.

"Perhaps, he doesn't intend to insult you," said Freeze-em-out, "but he does insult you nevertheless. You see, we usually fit our gifts to the character and condition of the recipient. We give a baby a rattle; a boy, a drum; a girl, a box of candy; and, if you'll pardon me

for saying it, we throw swill in a sewer. Now the man who picks me out to tell me these stories of Mr. Smut, says to me plainer than words, that he thinks my mind is a fitting receptacle for such swill; and if that is not an insult, I'd like to know what is."

"But," said Spineless, "you didn't say anything when Smut told ~~you~~ his story. You stood there and listened to it."

"Yes," said Freeze-em-out, "under the circumstances I thought that was the best thing to do. But you will notice that I took the first opportunity to get away. If Smut had come up to me alone, and started ~~to~~ to tell me that story, I would have ~~told~~ told him very bluntly that he had better ring central again; he'd got the wrong number."

"But," said Spineless, "I do business with Smut, and can't afford to antagonize him."

"Well," said Freeze-em-out, "if I couldn't run my business except on the basis of insults from my customers, I'd go into some other business."

Spineless thought a minute silently. "I guess you're right," he said. "But say, what did you do at the end of Smut's story? I never saw Smut so crestfallen and so ill at ease before."

"Just a little system of my own for such occasions. It is known as the Freeze-em-out System. When I happen to be in an audience where such stories are told, and where it could perhaps be stretching the point to suppose that the insult was intended for me personally, I try never to give encouragement to such stories. I purposely pretend to miss the point, and do my utmost not to laugh; for these stories are at times very ludicrous. Then if ~~I am~~ appealed to, I simply look the narrator squarely in the eye, without batting an eyelash, and tell him curtly that I don't get the point. It is practically better than a sermon on the subject, which is often out of place. But it shows the Smut Story-teller what I think of such things, and it is a pretty fair guarantee that he won't attempt any more such stories when I'm around."

"I see," said Spineless, very much ashamed. "I suppose you won't have any use for me after this."

"Why, bless your heart, Spineless," said Freeze-em-out, "I like you, old man. You're a pretty decent fellow; and really I'm not by any means ready for canonization myself. But if you don't mind, I'll tell you what's the matter with you. You ought to go to a certain chiropractor that I know. He helped me wonderfully. Name is Doc ~~Doc~~"

Principle. I'm afraid your vertebrae of human respect is a bit out of alignment. You get a few adjustments from Doctor Principle, and I think you'll be all right."

"Thanks, old man, for the advice," said Spineless; "I'll go to see him today."

Seventy Five Years Of Service

THE REDEMPTORISTS IN NEW ORLEANS

T. Z. AUSTIN, C.Ss.R.

In the midst of all these epidemics and national calamities, that would seem to have effectively hindered all growth and work of the parish, nevertheless a wonderful activity was displayed. We regret that we can give only the barest outline. For the rest we must refer our readers to Father Krieger's little book.

THE DAYS OF BRICK AND MORTAR.

Equally heroic times, in a way, were the days of building—the days of constant labor and anxiety. In 1854 an Orphan's Home was built and two years later given into the care of the Notre Dame Sisters. In 1855, through the efforts of Father Duffy, the new St. Alphonsus Church was begun.

Of the building of this church, Father Krieger writes:

"The erection of the edifice was made possible by the work of many of the men of the parish, who cheerfully offered to toil without compensation, so that a fit temple for the worship of God might be reared in their midst. Some of the parishioners were too poor to make contributions of money, but who shall say that theirs was not even a more acceptable gift, representing so much of sacrifice? Hard-working men, old and young, who had been toiling all day for their daily bread, hurried home to partake of a hasty meal, and were out again to the church site to put their hand to whatever task was assigned them. * * * The spirit shown by these parishioners of St. Alphonsus has never been surpassed, except in the ages of faith."

In 1858, the new St. Mary's Assumption Church for the German speaking people, began to be built. And the year before, mainly through the efforts of Father Girard, a saintly man, who soon after

became a martyr of the yellow fever, the foundations of the church of Notre Dame de Bon Secours, for the French, were laid.

Of these churches, Colonel Allison Owen, a noted architect and student of architecture, says: "The three great churches of the Redemptorist Fathers in New Orleans are, from an architectural point of view, a very interesting group of buildings. In even any casual account of them it must be remembered that they were built during a period when popular taste was about to go into the decline, which marked in such an unfortunate degree the end of the last century. It is a matter of great interest that they should have been so splendidly designed and so well executed. Each in its own way is a very excellent example of its special style of architecture, and singularly appropriate to the congregation for whose use it was constructed."

THE SCHOOL.

From the very beginning "the school beside the church" was one of the chief concerns of the Fathers. The schools the three congregations have erected have a wonderful record of growth and achievement to show, from the days of the first frame buildings to the present up-to-date constructions.

Already in 1853 St. Mary's German Congregation replaced their old school with a brick building. In 1856 it was given in charge of the School Sisters of Notre Dame from Milwaukee. St. Alphonsus Congregation started work on their new school in 1860. There were separate schools for boys and girls, to which later on were added a Commercial College and a High School. Orphan asylums were also built for boys and girls for both congregations, until a whole series of buildings crowded the section. From the great number of buildings forming the group, the place came to be widely known as "The Ecclesiastical Square of New Orleans." As the author remarks, it should have been called "The Ecclesiastical Subdivision," because the buildings are spread over several squares.

PAROCHIAL GROWTH.

This immense zeal and sacrifice for the building of churches, schools, high schools and asylums, carried on through several generations, would be proof enough that the spirit of the parishioners must have been deeply religious and that their spiritual growth never ceased or abated.

The same may be deduced from a glance at the parish chronicles,

which afford us an opportunity to compare the statistics for the successive years. Take the matter of Communions, which represent the ordinary vitality of a parish. In 1869 the total was 85,311; in 1922, it was 207,946. From 1852 to 1859 there were on the average each year 231 First Communions and 327 Confirmations; from 1880 to 1889, 237 First Communions and 367 Confirmations; and from 1919 to 1922 the average reaches 289 First Communions and 307 Confirmations. These figures show a steady rate of increase from year to year of growing-up youth.

Another sign of vitality in a parish is the number of vocations that have come from it. From the three Redemptorist congregations in New Orleans have been sent out one Archbishop, one Bishop, 50 Redemptorists, a number of priests in other religious orders, five secular priests, 20 Brothers of Mary, 105 Sisters of Notre Dame, 95 Sisters of Mercy, and more than 125 members of other Sisterhoods.

THE FUTURE.

To form a complete idea of the work of priests and people we ought to take a glance also at their missionary labors and social work. But space forbids.

The late lamented Archbishop Blenk, himself a child of the Redemptorist parish, in 1912 said:

"The Reverend Fathers of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer for so many years have labored faithfully in this part of the Lord's vineyard, and they have made their parishes the model parishes of the diocese. We feel that among the best legacies we can leave to our successor is the fruitfulness, the effectiveness, coupled with the unfailing modesty of the Redemptorist Fathers."

Such a record in the past allows us to look forward to the future with security and expectation of even greater achievements. The Diamond Jubilee is the prophecy of a still more glorious centenary.

If you love good books and draw fruit from them, your mind will be broadened, your Faith strengthened, your sense of right and justice rendered delicate and true, your mind will be admirably furnished for life's work, and your ideal will not be a false ideal.—*Barrett, S. J.*

The happiness of man in this life does not consist in the absence but in the mastery of his passions.

The King Comes Riding

A TALE OF THE CHRISTMASTIDE

J. W. BRENNAN, C.Ss.R.

Mary Elizabeth Patterson was a determined sort of girl. Determined in the mould of her chin, although winsome, smiling lips weakened the effect; determined in her medium-blond locks, which she still permitted to be bobbed in defiance of trans-Atlantic dictates to the contrary; determined in the arch of her eyebrows which were not plucked, in opposition to the vogue started by some of her set; determined in her abhorrence of all freakish fads in dress—King Tut styles not excepted; from the top of her well-shaped head to the daintily shod toe, six and sixty inches beneath, Mary Elizabeth Patterson was the embodiment of determination. Some said she was stubborn; but that all depends upon one's point of view, don't you know.

And moreover, she was determined in her ideals of a husband—that is, the husband she would have if she had any. That was a question, she determined, was still open to debate, rumors and reports about Willis Ford to the contrary notwithstanding. She looked at him thoughtfully from her cosy position in a window-seat as she spoke to him.

"I do not think anything justifies disregard of parents." Her brown eyes snapped indignation. She dropped the copy of Hearst's current number to the floor with a bang, and looked out at the snowflakes lazily drifting against the window-pane. Secretly, she knew that this pose made a striking picture, and she wanted Willis to be impressed.

"I do not think that we—that is, children—are any the less without obligation, even if we did have no choice in entering the world. That fellow in the story is wrong; decidedly so."

Twenty-one years of experience in mundane existence, embellished and more or less solidified by the results of a four years' incarceration in a finishing-school—Catholic, of course, thanks to her parents' care—had given her sufficient mental equipment to make her characteristic firmness rational rather than purely temperamental.

"I suppose so," agreed the very accommodating Willis Patrick Ford. He was thrilled with admiration at the wise principles of the girl he hoped to make his wife. "But I wasn't thinking of that when

I mentioned the story. What struck me was the author's way of dragging back characters after they've been married off. Rather odd, it strikes me." Willis, knowing Mary's penchant for culture and things of the mind, had figured on this display of literary interest impressing her. But Mary was not to be side-tracked.

Principles of ethics, sociology and catechetical lectures were teeming in her mind just then and they had to reach the air. Willis bore up well under the ordeal. Even the genial heat of the open fireplace in back of him failed to put him to sleep.

It must not, however, be assumed from this that Willis was a masculine booby; the happy-go-lucky, hit-and-miss type of man so often described in comic sections. He was only the victim of an affliction, a minor affliction at that, his name. Four years at a standard Catholic university, filled with trials and tribulations attendant on carrying such a name as Willis Ford, had softened his disposition as trials do, till now he was genial, tolerant, kindly-disposed. His name, open to a host of associations, had been the bastinado in his process of purification.

That the name had been given to him at all was due to the fact that at some day prior to his debut in human society, his father had acquired wealth. Before that event there had been Jack, Henry, Bill and Marie; all since either married or dead. Now there was himself, Willis—he sniffed rather than pronounced it—and his poor little sister, Iola Immaculata. Poor only because of the unjust burden of such a sobriquet—Iola!

"And what is more," concluded Mary, "I would never think of marrying a man whom I knew to be careless in his attentions to his parents, no matter what provocation they had given him." And she felt quite safe in her assertion, though she assumed an air of heroic adherence to principle. Willis was a paragon of devotion to his father and mother.

Dusk was falling, prematurely because of the snow, as the impromptu lecture ended and Willie rose to depart. Her final words rang in his ears; glorious testimony to the noble character of her soul.

As he turned at the gate to wave a last farewell, the boy carried a mental picture of her as he saw her last in the room, outlined in profile against the dull white of the snow-covered landscape, and set

off by a touch of color from the open log-fire. Some girl! Beautiful? The word was inadequate.

As Willis trudged up the long drive leading to the spacious brick edifice of late Colonial design his father had built a few years before, he thought of the marvelous good fortune his father had had. It took these old-timers to do things. From a laborer, his father had become moderately wealthy, even before Willis was born. And later another sudden increase had come to his fortune, and this home was the result. The present year found a Packard in the garage, the family well equipped for their future careers, and Patrick Ford in full, recognized standing as a pillar of St. Thomas' Congregation. It was even reported that he was thinking of running for some office in the next election. Of that Willis had no knowledge; in fact, on reflection, he discovered he had very little knowledge of any of his father's affairs.

"Self-centered, that's us," he mused, as he stamped the snow from his shoes on the doorstep. "As long as the old man signs the check for the monthly allowance and foots the school bills and keeps the home fires burning—that's all we care."

The big door opened as he approached. A wee little face peeked out, one eye at a time; a mass of tumbled, closely clustered curls following, all belonging to his little sister Iola.

"Hello, pal o' mine; why the ceremony?" he shouted gayly as he swung her up to his shoulder, then closed the door.

"Oh, Willis," she half sobbed, half whispered, "I been waitin' for you ever so long."

"Must be important, Sis, so we'll hurry." He placed her gently on the floor, doffed his out-door wraps, then allowed himself to be steered to the big arm-chair already located before the fireplace. Iola promptly clambered up on the wide arm, and cupped her hand to whisper in his ear.

"Papa came in more than an hour ago, and he looked so funny. All red in his face and his eyes shiny. And mamma made him go to his room and go to bed. He looked sick and he was cross—and—and he sc-scolded me."

"Gee, he must have been sick to do that!" exclaimed Willis. He marveled at the news his sister gave him, as his father had never known a day's illness as far back as he could remember. "Maybe it's a touch of the flu, Sis; they say the stuff's back again. Better say

some extra prayers for him tonight. You know Christmas is near, and it would spoil the day like everything if Dad was sick in bed."

"But, but, why did he sc-scold me?" she whimpered.

"When a man's sick," ventured Willis in his clumsy effort to render comfort, "he's apt to do or say anything. Just forget it, Sis." Then suddenly as an idea struck him: "I'll tell you what to do; if he does not come down for dinner, as soon as you have finished, you run up to his room and cheer him up. You'll see he never meant to scold you." She clapped her hands at the idea, hopped off the chair and began a dance of her own invention on the hearth-rug. All sorts of plans for helping Daddy to while away the time were rushing tumultuously through her head—and the scolding was forgotten.

As Willis had predicted, little Iola received a warm welcome when, after hurriedly finishing her meal, she seized an armful of her best dolls and rushed upstairs to entertain her father. Mrs. Ford listened for a moment, till the first shriek of childish laughter re-echoed down the stairs, then turned to her son to discuss the unfortunate incident.

"And the worst of it is, Willis, we were to attend a Christmas Eve party at the Pattersons, while you and the maid fixed the tree."

"Well, mother, what's wrong with him? Can't be office work; he would have shown signs of it before. And I hope it's not flu."

"I don't think it's flu," his mother faltered. She had a vivid recollection of the last visitation of that epidemic. It had taken away Marie. "At least I hope not. He seemed feverish—but he does not want the doctor. He said rest would fix him up."

They went into the living room to while away the time till Iola would have to be put to bed. There were shouts of laughter upstairs every few minutes, and feeling that the sick man was better off with such cheerful company, they remained down stairs.

"Say, mother, how did Dad make all his money, anyhow? Whatever his secret is, I'll have to learn it. I'll need some myself soon—if Mary agrees."

"Really, Willis," his mother answered slowly, "I don't know. He has been in the commission business since the war. In the past few years, he has had wonderful success. All I know is that I always have plenty of money for the expenses of the house; beyond that he never inflicts shop talk and its details on me. It's a practice he has had ever since we were married."

"Great stuff, that; sort of letting each party specialize in one kind of work, eh? I wonder if Mary and I would do it that way."

"It's better not done that way, Willis. Two heads are always better than one, even if one belongs only to a listener. I have wanted your father's views on things about the home many times; but he always insisted on my doing what I pleased. And as he never offered information about the office, I never asked."

Willis lit a cigar thoughtfully. The whole panorama of married life seemed spread before him; he felt important.

"It sounds good, mother; but it looks like a too literal application of the saying, 'Never let the left hand know what the right is doing.' I think Mary and I will exchange views on everything."

"By the way, Willis," inquired his mother with interest, "is it settled? Are you engaged?"

"Well—not yet," admitted Willis.

A little later, they heard Iola calling them. Together they ascended the stairs. As they neared Mr. Ford's room, they could hear his even voice, telling a story to the child. Through the half-open door, they saw the child perched upon the bed, one of her father's arms holding her, the other making gestures.

"Then Mary and St. Joseph and the Christmas King came riding into the city of Bethlehem on a donkey—a little mule, like the animals you see pulling the children's wagons in the summer time."

"Did a little thing like Annie Rosemere's donkey carry them all?" queried Iola.

"No, St. Joseph had to walk. But it carried our Blessed Mother, and they traveled in the cold up to Bethlehem and—well, tomorrow is Christmas Eve, so we'll finish the story then. Now run and get Willis. I want to see him and you must go to bed. Good night!" She kissed her father and hurried out, almost running into the eave-droppers.

"How's Dad?" Willis began, as he entered the room.

"Better now, son. It doesn't amount to much; I suppose it's because I've never known illness in thirty years that I feel it now. But it will be gone by tomorrow. A slight fever, I suppose."

"Well, tomorrow you're going to stay in bed," his wife interposed. "We're going to have no more flu victims around here." Mr. Ford made a grimace of impatience—a trifle forced, Willis thought. But then what purpose could his father have in feigning illness. He put the thought aside; it savored of disloyalty.

"We just came in for a few minutes, Daddy," added Mrs. Ford, "then we'll let you go to sleep."

"I want to see Willis first," remarked Mr. Ford. "There are some things at the office I want to attend to; and he can bring the papers here. It is important, but"—he added hastily as he saw his wife preparing to object—"they will not take time or trouble. Willis can attend to it all for me."

Christmas Eve dawned crisp, clear and white. With the rush of last minute shopping, including the purchase of the best tree on the market for his sister, Willis had not a moment for even a chat with Mary—a rare accident indeed—and in fact, did not get around to his father's office till noon.

He was admitted by one of the clerks, but was not allowed to go to his father's desk till the reason of his visit had been checked over the telephone. Willis was not surprised, for he knew his father was a stickler for discipline. Meanwhile he noted the types of men with whom his father did business. Rough, they certainly were: unshaven, some of them; unkempt and disreputable, others; and others, of undoubtedly good standing in society. A commission man has no class limits, he thought.

When he was handed the key to his father's desk, and for the first time in his life found himself seated before the business-like array of documents that filled its every pigeon-hole, a thrill of mingled envy and pride came over him. He wondered whether he, with all his previous training, would ever succeed in achieving so much.

But there was no time to spare. He discovered the papers his father desired, all piled neatly on the desk as though for immediate reference. As he picked them up, a strange odor caught his attention. There were stains on the topmost sheets. He placed them to his nose—whisky! The revelation appalled him. Without more ado, he looked around the desk, and in a deep drawer, nestled among files of letters, stood a flask half drained. The thrill of pride and envy gave place to a wave of unutterable disgust. His father's illness was explained—the stuff had got him.

In an instant, by a freakish phenomenon of memory, bits of data he had accidentally overheard or seen during the past month, crowded together, forming themselves almost automatically into one compact, crushing fact: his father was a bootlegger.

The air-castles built up around his father during the course of his hero-worshipping youth vanished. The boy, stunned by the revelation, picked up the papers—they were bills for consignments of whisky and choice wines—locked the desk and departed.

By the time Willis had reached home he had placed the bomb of his destruction beneath his feet. In his abstracted mood, he had met and failed to notice Mary Patterson, who was out on a shopping tour. She was in high dudgeon at the snub.

His father's opening words released the guard Willis had placed upon his lips, and as he tossed the bills upon a table, he began his questions concerning Mr. Ford's business.

"There's money in it, bundles of it. I can use it to better advantage than others who would take it. And there's nothing wrong with the work. All I do is gather the orders from the patrons, send them their bills, receive payment and deduct my discount. These bills you brought mean several hundreds of dollars for me."

"And scores of broken homes for others," snapped his son. "I never dreamed that my father was a bootlegger—and that I had been educated on the money extorted through crime."

"Easy there, son! Be careful of your language. This business is only temporary. After a few weeks, I'll have enough to retire. Meanwhile—"

"Meanwhile you yourself will fall for the stuff—as you did yesterday."

"What do you mean?" The older man was angered white at the insinuation.

"I am going to ask you one question, Dad. Are you going to give it up?"

"Just as soon as I have banked a little more—or when I feel like it."

"Then I may as well go. I have no respect for bootleggers or their kind, and if my father puts himself in that class, I can have no respect for him. God help you. Goodby." He left the room and the house.

The crash of the closing door was echoed by a dull thud upstairs as Mr. Ford collapsed. Weeks of conscience-worry, increased rather than relieved by daily growing indulgence in the poison he retailed, and a system quickly weakened by the use of the stimulant had made him little able to stand the present strain.

His wife had heard the loud, rapid talking upstairs. When the deadly silence set in she hurried to her husband's room, her heart heavy with foreboding. She called for Willis; there was no answer.

Later when the doctor had declared Mr. Ford out of danger, and their kindly pastor, who had hurried over from the confessional, was leaving, she realized for the first time what had happened and at the same time received her first word of consolation.

"Don't worry, Mrs. Ford," said the priest; "that boy will be back in the morning; in time for breakfast. They always do." Then he lowered his voice: "It's too bad it happened, but I think it has done wonderful good." She nodded with understanding. But the cost!

Later in the evening, Mr. Ford continued his story of the Christmas King who came riding to the hillside cave, while his wife and Mary Patterson arranged the Christmas tree for Iola. The girl had slipped away from the party to render assistance at the Ford's.

"Wonderful girl," Mr. Ford had remarked to his wife when he heard of it. "Much too good for that educated snob we call our son." His wife's eyes filled with tears, but she said nothing. He was sorry he had spoken. The words came back to him often in the course of his story and his mind wandered. Iola put her questions persistently.

"'S' funny, Daddy—the king came ridin' on a donkey with presents for all men, 'n'—"

"Yes, that's it," he agreed. "And tomorrow He will come riding right into our hearts—"

"But it's funny—He came ridin' to the cave before He was borned." The words were barely whispered; her head nodded; she was asleep.

His wife entered then and announced the tree was ready. She looked strange.

"And Mary's gone after Willis! She is driving her Buick!"

He looked up in surprise.

"She thought he had snubbed her this afternoon. She met him again after he left the house and he offered to escort her to church; and she snubbed him in return. She feels she is to blame for his leaving; and she is going to catch him by wire, then drive till she brings him home."

What a cost his folly had demanded. Broken homes! Willis was prophetic. Mr. Ford clutched Iola to him as though he feared she

would be snatched from him, too. Somewhere bells began to ring for midnight Mass. Christmas was here. The King of hope and peace was coming again; to bring hope and peace to earth; to them, two sorrowing parents. But the sorrow was shattered. The clock in the hallway struck twelve.

"Merry Christmas," greeted Mrs. Ford bravely. And her husband, not to be outdone, from the depths of his chastened spirit, answered as bravely, "Merry Christmas!"

[TO BE CONCLUDED.]

A NON-CATHOLIC TRIBUTE TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

The International Sunday School Lesson for a recent date contains the following remarkable tribute to the Blessed Virgin, from the pen of William F. Ellis (non-Catholic):

"Amid the ruins of the Smyrna fire, I noticed a curious phenomenon. In the courtyard of the French hospital, the buildings of which had been completely burned, stood a white, marble statue of the Madonna and Child, completely untouched by fire or smoke or falling embers. Amidst all the blackness of ruin above it, the figure of the Mother with the Babe was as white and unsullied as when it left the sculptor's hand. Not a flake of marble had been chipped off by the intense heat, although marble walls all about the city had crumbled to dust, and iron girders had become bent and gnarled.

"In like manner, the personality of ages, a spotless, beautiful figure, revered and beloved by countless myriads. Diana of Ephesus has gone the way of Venus and the more primitive goddess, but the pure and lovely personality of Mary remains as the most highly favored among women. Motherhood everywhere turns toward her with a sense of kinship and devotion. * * *

"She is the ages' perfect embodiment of womanhood. Piety, obedience, service and unspeakable reward are her spiritual characteristics. In a day when so many young women have lost their moorings and their bearings, it is restful to turn to the personality of the woman whom God found worthy to be the Mother of His Son, the world's Saviour."

To acquire a habit of choosing for good motives in a deliberate, confident manner is to improve our character.—*Barrett, S. J.*

Catholic Anecdotes

THE VITAL QUESTION

John Cardinal Fisher, who held so high a place in the State under Henry VIII of England, was one of the noblest characters of that period. Because he refused to take the oath imposed by Henry, after his adulterous union with Anne Boleyn, an oath which would have meant the renunciation of his faith, he was cast into prison and condemned to death.

False friends then approached the aged Cardinal and urged him to yield to the King.

"He will restore to you all the privileges and positions you held before," they said.

"Return within three days," said the Cardinal, at last, to rid himself of their importunity, "and then if you answer me one question, I shall accede to your wishes."

His counselors rejoiced that they had won him over, and at the appointed time they returned to the Cardinal, prepared to answer any question he might put.

"This is the question," began the noble prelate: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?"

None dared to answer. Silently they slunk away, leaving the Cardinal to die a martyr for his Faith.

WHAT HE LEARNED

The famous French engraver, Gaillard, was at one time an unbeliever. He made the acquaintance of a young artist who was a devout Catholic, and the two had many religious discussions. The last time they met, Gaillard said: "You are still very young. Your faith is beautiful, but absurd. If I meet you ten years from now, you will have found this out for yourself."

"It is not probable that we shall ever meet again in this world, but

I can promise to meet you at the Last Judgment, and you will see then who was right," his friend replied.

The two never met again. Gaillard never knew what became of his young friend, but he himself died a Franciscan friar.

THE FRANCISCAN'S MASTERPIECE

An old friar, clad in the rough, brown habit of St. Francis, stood contemplating an artist's easel upon which was stretched a canvas of virgin whiteness. In his hands he held palette and brushes, while a look, almost of despair, was upon his face. Ah, how he wanted to paint—to paint with the fire and spirit which had once animated him, but which, as old age crept upon him, was slowly dying out like the last rays of a candle flickering in its socket.

"One last picture," he sighed; "would that I could paint but one more, and that of the Divine Infant Jesus, with which to honor this glorious Christmas-tide."

Slowly his brushes were laid aside and his fingers instinctively sought the rosary which hung from his cord. He prayed, and as the beads slipped through his fingers, the door opened and a little lad, clad in the garb of a shepherd, stood before him.

"Do not be discouraged, Brother," said the boy, his voice fraught with sweetness. "If you wish, I will pose for you, and with the help of the Virgin, perhaps, you may be able to achieve the holy desire of your heart."

Eagerly the Brother seized his brushes and touched the canvas, and as he worked, his surroundings seemed to fade from view, everything being lost in the radiance from the face of the shepherd lad. It was as though he painted on air, but there before him was a picture, his ideal of all that was good and beautiful.

"Peace, Little Master," he cried in ecstasy, as he viewed his work. "Who are you?"

And the lad made answer: "I am the Prince of Peace, the Infant Jesus, and unto you who have loved me so much, I will give My Paradise."

In China, we are told, a convert walked ten miles to hear daily Mass and was never late. Question: How far do those who come late to Mass in American Catholic Churches have to walk?

Pointed Paragraphs

CHRISTMAS

The very word stands for everything happy. It calls to mind the show windows hung with decorations and splendid with toys and gifts—the delight of young and old; it calls to mind the holly and bells hanging in the windows and the glimmer of Christmas trees at night; it calls to mind the home of the poor visited by some charitable, Christ-like soul; it calls to mind the laughter of little ones and the smiles of their elders.

All joy is poured into this memory; laughter rings through it. Christ brought all. Without Him all would be tawdry—senseless.

May Christ come into the home of every one of our readers this Christmas day. With Him joy will enter in.

FAIREST OF THE FAIR

They rant and rave, self-professed ministers of the Word of God, from pulpit and platform; their work is destruction. Weapons of oratory, culture, appealing personality, prestige of social standing and finally wealth are poured into the arsenals of modern religionists. And the attack? It is directed anew against the bulwarks that have withstood such attacks for centuries.

So much for generalities. When it comes to a question of particulars, the honor given to Our Lady by the Catholic Church and its members is a special target. The Virgin! The result of the poetical and romantic spirit of the middle ages. Fit subject for poetry, for painting; as a music-master's inspiration. But a subject for religious honor? That may have been in days gone by, but present enlightenment forbids such superstition.

And from city and farm, from cathedral and humble mission-chapel; in peaceful America, and chaos-riven Europe and darkest Africa and struggling Orient, the eighth of December finds the united voices of Catholic Christendom uniting in a world-wide hymn of praise to the honor of the fairest, purest maiden the world has ever seen;

the Mother of the Saviour. Amid the discords of clashing human interests, this spiritual harmony is perfect, for "Behold all nations shall call me blessed."

So it has been, so it is, so it will be as long as there are hearts on earth to love and lips to praise. But only pure hearts can enter into this grand chorus!

Is your voice one of the number?

REVILLE VS. ELIOT

The press-agent, the publicity-man, the advertising "engineer," has made himself a character to be reckoned with in modern life. Usually the reckoning takes the primitive form of a process of subtraction.

A genius, aided substantially by a powerfully financed firm, has been managing the campaign for the spread of Dr. Eliot's "Five-Foot Shelf of Books." And the publicity given was and is deserved. The collection made by the President Emeritus of Harvard contains 418 masterpieces by 302 authors, all gathered in one series to economize the prize of purchase. That the idea is a good one, goes without saying. There is need, great need for more selective, conscientious reading on the part of the American public. And the fact that men or women have to leave school early in order to make their living need no longer be an obstacle to the acquiring of the culture that goes far to make life worth living.

But—there's a but after all. The standard used by the learned Doctor, whatever it may have been, is not the standard that would bring about the best selection of reading matter for a Catholic public. Entire topics of vital interest to a Catholic who is sufficiently wide-awake to desire such a selection at all, have been left uncovered. Other topics, History, Politics, Science, Religion are stocked with little that is sound and much that is dangerous.

For the Catholic reading public, desirous of acquiring a representative and still economical library, Father Reville, S. J., has edited a list of truly representative books, Catholic as well as non-Catholic. The brochure, "My Bookcase, A Guide to Sound and Interesting Reading," would be a handy assistant in the work of selecting Christmas gifts.

Scratch out the useless trifles from your list, and make this Christmas bring a lasting, practical souvenir to your Catholic friend.

IT COSTS TO BE BLUE

In a recent issue of the *American* there was an article that should be of benefit to many.

Blues are to a great extent a matter of habit. By blues we mean grouches of various kinds—but chiefly the grouch of wounded pride and self-pity. Of course it doesn't move us to banish them, to think how little reason there is for them. That the cause is mostly imaginary—that they do not remedy matters one bit—are all reasons good enough when we are not blue but of no value when we are so.

But a writer in the *American* suggests a new angle. It costs money to be blue, he says. He gives a common sense explanation:

"No matter what your age may be, everything seems hard—when you are blue. Everything you think of doing is difficult, or can't be done, or perhaps is not worth while. You find a surprising number of things to fight about. This condition comes to everybody. The younger you are, the shorter the attack. But along between twenty-five and forty, the attacks may come more frequently. You may turn into a chronic grouch, and when a man becomes a grouch he is through."

Now here are the reasons:

"A man who is blue during two days a week has, other things being equal, two-sevenths less chance than the man who keeps his balance seven days a week, for the blue days are blank days. They are ideal-less days, when one just goes through the motions and marks time. The man who is habitually blue and pessimistic always gets into a rut and grumblingly does his work." Such work will seldom be well done.

Another reason: "A man who finds himself grouchy or frequently, or even infrequently, blue and depressed is only using a part of whatever ability and resource he may naturally have."

It costs money to be blue! Yes and we are justified in saying: It costs merits for heaven—eternal money—to be blue. It robs us of many chances of doing good—makes us slothful in religious exercises—stops up the flow of charity with selfish preoccupations—and perhaps makes us fall into many venial faults.

Christmas is the feast of real optimism. Kneel before the Crib a while and make a new start.

THE WONDER OF IT

We find it hard to understand how the K. K. K. could ever appeal to any sane American mind. We live in the midst of non-Catholics—of people of all nationalities—of Americans as native as the most native K. K. K.—and we are on the best of terms with all. We are the best of friends.

But, then, great crowds in Indiana, Oregon, Oklahoma, and Texas, and large numbers in other states and cities, are positively and violently anti-us, anti-Catholic.

Who are they?

Why are they?

Father J. Elliott Ross, a Paulist, endeavors to give an answer in a little pamphlet issued by the Central Bureau of the Central Verein—a pamphlet that is worth reading. He blames it on excitement and ignorance.

Against the first, he advises: "Keep Down passion!" "It is a hard lesson to learn, but the best thing we can do is simply to keep passion down as much as possible; this hysteria feeds on passion, and everything that we do to arouse it, makes matters worse." And again:

"See things straight!" * * * "The bigotry is not as widespread as many persons think. And there is considerable truth in the old adage that we get what we expect. If a man looks for trouble, he will find it. If he looks for bigotry he will experience it. And the reason is that he will assume a certain attitude and tone that will irritate others, and they will retaliate."

Against the second cause he urges: "Remove Ignorance!"

"We ought to realize that bigotry is based on ignorance. Of course, there are some professional bigots, men and women, who are in the business of stirring up religious hate merely for the money they can get out of it. But their profit depends on large numbers being ignorant. It is ignorance that is really the breeding place of religious bigotry."

Every Catholic, then, has a serious obligation of being sufficiently instructed in his Faith to be able to give a reason for the Faith he professes. For this reason there should, again, be Catholic papers and Catholic books in every Catholic home.

Our Lady's Page

IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

"Many thanks to Our Lady for bringing harmony to our home after many years of disunion."

"Dear Mother, I thank you for favors received since I made the Novena in August. The first was granted in a most extraordinary manner. A second was granted the other day when I obtained a position and I ask you to help me to succeed in my new work."

"My dear Mother of Perpetual Help, I wish to thank you for helping me to make a good confession, and I ask grace to keep my good resolutions, and help me to succeed with my new course and obtain a good position."

"Recently I invoked your aid for my wife, who had to undergo an operation which proved serious. My prayers were not in vain, as the operation was a great success. The doctor said it was a marvel. I hasten to offer my sincere thanks."

"Dear Mother of Perpetual Help, I come again to offer my sincere thanks for the wonderful favor just granted me, the restoration of my health. It seemed too great a petition; I was almost afraid to ask for it. To me it seems a miracle as it was impossible to expect anything so great. Went to Holy Communion and had a High Mass said in your honor. Thank you sincerely and hope you will always remain my true and faithful friend."

"I desire to give thanks to our dear Mother of Perpetual Help for having heard my prayers and delivered me from another hemorrhage. I now have my full strength, thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and His Blessed Mother."

"Dear Mother, I thank thee for the great grace you have obtained for me. My mother had a terrible affliction which seemed very dangerous. I promised a Mass if she would be cured and also prayed to our dear Mother of Perpetual Help, and now my mother is well again. I am very grateful as I know that that was the only source of help."

Catholic Events

The Holy Father has made the third centenary of the martyrdom of St. Josaphat, Archbishop of the Ruthenian diocese of Polotsk, the occasion of publishing a Papal Encyclical in which he asks for prayers that the Christians of the Oriental Rites may return to communion with the Holy See. In the first part of the Encyclical he expresses sorrow for the events that separated the Oriental and Roman Churches, and praise for the many Oriental dioceses which remained faithful to Rome despite the schism. In the second part, he deplores the continued separation of so many Eastern Slavs, and trusts that the prayers of St. Josephat will bring the reunion. He says that the adherents of the Greek, Slav, Syriac, Copt, Armenian, and Chaldean rites, provided they are in union with Rome, form a single family together with the Latin Rite.

* * *

Msgr. Maglione, Papal Nuncio at Berne, has been received by the Holy Father, to whom he made a report of the last session of the League of Nations. The new mandates over Syria and Palestine, dependent on the Franco-Italian agreement, will again raise the question of the guardianship of the Holy Places. Msgr. Maglione will receive from the Holy Father precise instructions to enable him to continue his negotiations with the League.

* * *

The discussion of Anglican Reunion with Rome in a leading article of the London Times, has placed this topic in the popular mind in a position that it has hardly ever occupied before. It discusses the question quite seriously, commends the efforts to do everything to promote unity between the Church of England and the great Church of the West," and ends by declaring that in some way this union eventually will be accomplished.

* * *

The Pope has announced his intention of restoring the Lateran palace. The first floor will be utilized for a museum; the second will be a missionary and ethnographical museum. The construction of buildings to house the missionary exhibition of 1925 has been begun.

* * *

In a speech to a group of fifteen hundred young men, representing a Society of French Catholic youths, that met on the battlefield of Douaumont, their President said: "My friends, as submissive Catholics, let us bow our heads respectfully toward Rome. And from this memorable field of battle, let us salute with veneration him who yesterday strove to arrest the horrors of war, him who today desires to avoid new hetacombs and him who to-morrow will again and always raise his voice in the name of the Prince of Peace."

At a general conference of English Catholics to discuss the national and international duties of Catholic citizens, the unanimous opinion was expressed that the Vatican be accorded recognition and membership in the League of Nations at Geneva. Sir Eric Drummond, secretary-general of the League, who was present announced his approval of the suggestion.

* * *

The Italian Alpine Club, of which Pius XI, before he became Pope, was an enthusiastic member, has determined to call one of the Alpine peaks the Peak of Pius XI, in honor of the Pope.

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A nationwide canvass is being conducted by America, the Catholic Weekly, to obtain a vote of the Catholic reading public in regard to the ten best Catholic books published within the last century. One of the unique features of the contest is the special prominence given to the lists of books chosen by the Catholic colleges as corporate bodies. A final list made up of books receiving the greatest number of votes will be published in January.

* * *

This year marked the 358th anniversary of the founding of the first Catholic Church in Florida by the Spaniards in what is now the city of St. Augustine. The parish of St. Augustine is by far the oldest in the land. It was organized in 1565, by colonists from Spain, more than half a century before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth. It has a full set of records of baptisms, marriages, etc., since 1595.

* * *

"The Catholic Telegraph" of Cincinnati, is the oldest Catholic paper in America. It is now in its 92nd year. The reasons for the establishment of the paper, it is recalled, "were doubtless to be found in the bitter attacks made on Catholicity at the time by sectarian journals, and so vitriolic were these outbursts that at times they drew the condemnation of the secular press which in those days was anything but friendly to the Catholic cause."

It seems the Church must always be persecuted.

* * *

The heroic work of fifteen nuns is responsible for the saving of the lives of seventy young girls who were in the main building of the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy in Pittsburg, when it was destroyed by fire. After the girls had been guided to safety through the smoke-filled corridors, it was found that two were missing. Several sisters returned to the burning building and rescued them. Nine of the nuns had to be taken to the Hospital later for treatment. The loss is estimated at \$500,000.

* * *

That a Catholic high school had a better 1923 yearbook than any other big school east of the Mississippi, is the verdict of the judges in the National Yearbook Contest conducted by the Artcraft Guild of Chicago, Ill. The prize was awarded to Central Catholic High School of Toledo, Ohio, as winner of third place in class one, which includes all high schools in the United States having an enrollment of over 500.

The interest of the Holy Father in every phase of the Catholic Press is shown by the fact that recently he himself offered three prizes for the children who would obtain the greatest number of subscriptions to the "Corrierina," a Catholic paper for children.

* * *

Donations totalling 350,000 Italian lire have been recently received from the Pope for the relief of the poor of Germany. Large donations for relief work have also been received from the Catholic of Mexico. Under the leadership of Archbishop Mora of Mexico City an organization has been formed to raise funds for relief work in Germany.

* * *

According to Associated Press dispatches, the Rev. James A. Griffin, D.D., rector of St. Mary's Church, Joliet, Ill., has been named Bishop of Alton, to succeed the late Bishop James Ryan.

* * *

The pupils of the parochial school at Menomonee Falls entered their work in a fair held at Milwaukee recently and took home with them thirteen first prizes and forty-two ribbons.

* * *

The following are the results of a five week Mission held by the Redemptorist Fathers at Holy Redeemer Church, Detroit: Confessions heard, 9,015; Communions distributed, 55,034. The attendance by actual count was: Married Women, 2,138; Single Women, 1,644; Married Men, 1,623; Single Men, 1,796; Children, 1,814. The average attendance was 1,720. One night over 2,400 were present.

* * *

The remailing department of the International Catholic Truth Society reports that 1,591,221 papers and magazines were distributed to all parts of the world. In addition, 369,228 pamphlets containing instructive and edifying Catholic literature were sent out. An active part of the remailing work is the prison section. Chaplains of the Atlanta and the Ohio penitentiaries have sent in requests for school books, fiction books, books on religious topics and the like.

* * *

The Rev. J. J. Sigstein, founder of the Society of Missionary Cathedists, which is sending trained women into the Southwest to save the faith of the scattered Mexicans, reports great progress in the work. Applications to the number of 150 have been received. Trained nurses, teachers and even superintendents of hospitals are offering their services. The only obstacle to the growth of the work is the usual lack of funds. Proselyters are spending fortunes to rob the Mexicans of their faith.

* * *

After the fumes of acid escaping from a broken tank had driven back all rescuers in an accident at the General Bakelite Company in Perth Amboy, N. J., Father John Larkin, unhesitatingly entered the building and administered the last Sacraments to Mathew Knishinski who had been deluged by the acid. The unfortunate man died a few minutes after the priest had brought him this last consolation of religion.

— THE — Liguorian Question Box

(Address all Questions to "The Liguorian" Oconomowoc, Wis.
Sign all Questions with name and address)

What is meant by the doctrine of the "Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin?"

The dogma of the Immaculate Conception, as explained by Pope Pius IX, means that the Blessed Virgin: "In the first instant of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace granted by God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race, was preserved exempt from all stain of original sin."

The Immaculate Conception consequently does not refer, as some non-Catholics imagine, to the virgin-birth of our Lord, nor to His sinlessness; neither does it imply on the part of the Blessed Virgin that her conception like our Lord's was without a human father. She was born of St. Joachim and St. Anna, her parents, just as any other child. But the doctrine means that when the soul of the Blessed Virgin was created and infused into her body, at that very moment, sanctifying grace was given to her, before sin could have taken effect in her soul.

To rightly understand this doctrine, we must remember that in paradise, from their creation, our first parents were endowed with sanctifying grace and many other extraordinary privileges; all these they lost with sanctifying grace through their sin. And since Adam was the representative of the human race in paradise, all mankind was implicated in his fall, and consequently all men inherit from Adam the stain of the original sin. However by a special favor of God, Mary, who was to become the Mother of the Redeemer, was excepted; she did not inherit original sin, as is the case with all the other descendants of Adam; it was excluded from her soul. And with the exclusion of original sin followed also in her case the exclusion of the other evils, that essentially pertain to original sin, such as concupiscence, ignorance and proneness to evil. However she was not made exempt from the temporal pen-

alties of Adam's sin, from sorrow, bodily infirmities and death. Like to her Divine Son, Who was the "Man of Sorrows," because He took upon Himself the sins of men, she became the "Mother of Sorrows" because of her close association with Him.

This great privilege of exemption from the universal law of original sin was granted to Mary through the same merits of Christ, by which all others are cleansed from original sin by baptism. Being a child of Adam, Mary was in need of redemption, not indeed a redemption to free her from sin, but a redemption to preserve her from sin.

Is it a mortal sin if one eats meat on Friday in a restaurant, when one forgets all about it being Friday? And must you tell that in confession?

If through no fault, one forgets that it is Friday and eats meat, no mortal sin has been committed, whether one eats in a restaurant or not. To commit a mortal sin, you must know that you are breaking the law. With regard to confession, there is no obligation to confess such an involuntary breaking of the law.

Is it a sin to leave the church after mass on Sunday morning, if Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament is to be given immediately after the mass?

There is no obligation to remain for Benediction, but it certainly is not edifying to see people rush from the church, whilst preparations are being made at the altar for Benediction. Such people evidently do not seem to realize that our Lord is about to bless them, and to say the least, this hurry manifests a lack of appreciation of God's graces. Of course there may be times, when a person has a good reason for not staying for Benediction, and if such is really the case our Lord's blessing no doubt will follow them in the fulfillment of their duty, but these occasions will be rare, for as a rule the Benediction service lasts only a few minutes.

Some Good Books

Talks to Boys, By Rev. Joseph P. Conroy, S. J. Published by Benziger Bros.

Father Conroy's book, issued some years ago proved to be so popular and at the same time so helpful that it is now being published in paper cover at a price that anybody can manage. This ought to bring the book almost within reach of everybody.

A glance at the chapter heads would alone suggest the boy's world. "A Center Shot," "On Bad Umpiring," "Bluffer & Co.," "The Candy-Store Dreamer," and so on.

And as you get into the "Talks" themselves, you feel that you are really in the boy's world. Everybody will feel at home. He will understand.

Father Conroy shows that he knows our American boy. Make his acquaintance, lad. How about a Christmas present for your boy, Dad?

The Selwyns in Dixie, by Clementia. Published by Matre and Co., Chicago. Price, postpaid, \$1.50.

"Clementia" no doubt is a name that all our girls know. Hasn't she given us year after year such delightful books as *Mostly Mary*, *Mary's Rainbow*, *Uncle Frank's May*, *The Quest of Mary Selwyn*, *Bird-a-Lea*?

And no girl that has made the acquaintance of that charming circle, will fail to welcome "The Selwyns in Dixie"

It will make a splendid Christmas gift for any girl.

The Wonder Days. By Marion Ames Taggart. Published by Benziger Brothers, New York. Price 35c. postpaid 40c.

Last year we brought to the notice of our readers two children's books by the same author: "The Wonder Story" and "The Wonder Gifts."

The children were her critics and the children were delighted with these books.

Now we have a third in the series, "The Wonder Days." There is the same simplicity and wealth of teach-

ing in the text—the same interesting manner and beautifully colored illustrations that will surely attract the child.

It is the story of Nazareth Days that is presented to the children—a story full of rich lessons. Miss Taggart has utilized them well.

For Better for Worse. A Novel. By Martin J. Scott, S. J. Published by Benziger Brothers, New York. Price \$1.75.

We have received several books from the pen of Father Scott, and everyone has placed his readers under obligation to him. Father Scott is always "much alive." And he is that in the present work.

It is a story that will grip every reader. It opens up with such a light romantic scene, one would hardly suspect the tragic climax and the inspiring solution that make you rise from the reading of the book, with a renewed faith in man, and a stronger attachment to your Faith.

Jerry and Felice—Catholics both—both individuals whose like can be found in any parish—show by their life how the better can be made the worse—and yet again, how, through Faith, the worst can be turned to the best.

Keep the Gate. By Rev. Joseph J. Williams. Published by Benziger Brothers, New York. Price, \$1.50 net.

The Motif of the book is assigned in the subtitle: Guarding the Soul against Sin.

The story of a brave Jamaican lad's heroism during an earthquake in 1907 gives the title and the setting.

Seldom have I seen the eternal truths brought out in so vivid a manner, yet with all the vigor and color and interest of our up-to-date manner. Woven in are a number of facts and anecdotes that give it human interest.

It is a book for serious moments and it will keep them from getting dull.

Lucid Intervals

"Isn't there some fable about the ass disguising himself with a lion skin?"

"Yes, but now the colleges do the trick with a sheepskin."

The woman orator stood upon her platform and looked over the sea of faces.

"Where would man be today were it not for woman?" she inquired.

She paused a moment.

"Again I repeat," she said, "where would man be today were it not for woman?"

"In the Garden of Eden," answered a male voice from the rear.

School Inspector: "Who is the laziest boy in your class, Johnny?"

Johnny: "I dunno."

Inspector: "I should think you would know. When all other children are industriously writing or studying their lessons, who is it that sits idly in his seat and watches the rest, instead of working himself?"

Johnny: "The teacher."

The following story was floating round the Devonshire club the other day:

A hotel manager coming along the corridor saw the "boots" kneeling on the floor and cleaning a pair of boots outside a bedroom door.

"Haven't I told you that you are not to clean the boots in the corridor, but to take them down stairs?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then why are you doing it?"

"Because the man in this room is a Scotchman, sir, and he's hanging on to the laces."

A Scotchman was strolling through the market place in Glasgow one day and close at his heels followed his faithful collie. Attracted by a fine display of shell and other fish the Scot stopped to admire, perhaps to purchase. The dog stood by, gently wagging its tail, while its master engaged the fishmonger in conversation.

Unfortunately for the beastie its tail dropped for a moment over a big basketful of fine, live lobster. Instantly one of the largest lobsters snapped its claws on the tail, and the surprised collie dashed off through the market, yelping with pain, while the lobster hung on grimly, though dashed violently from side to side. The fishmonger for a moment was speechless with indignation; then, turning to his prospective customer, he bawled:

"Mon! mon! whistle to yer dog, whistle to yer dog!"

"Hoots, mon," returned the other complacently, "whistle to yer lobster!"

The Plumber at the door: "I've come to fix that old tub in the kitchen."

Mamma's Precious: "Oh, mamma! Here's the doctor to see the cook!"

The more than usual lack of intelligence among the students that morning had got under the professor's skin.

"Class is dismissed," he said, exasperatedly. "Please don't flap your ears as you pass out."

Fond Parent—"Now, Doris, if you won't kiss your uncle, I shall have to send you to bed."

Doris (after a few moments' silence)—"Very well—good-night, mamma."

Two students on a train were telling about their abilities to see and hear. The one says: "Do you see that barn over there on the horizon?"

"Yes."

"Can you see that fly walking around on the roof of that barn?"

"No, but I can hear the shingles crack when he steps on them."

Guest: "Do you make a reduction to people in the same line of business?"

Manager: "Yes. Are you a restaurant keeper, too?"

Guest: "No, I'm a thief by profession."

